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exposing said layer to patterned light to substantially cause removal of said layer from said support in exposed areas.

8. The method as in claim 7 wherein the patterned light is UV light.

9. The method as in claim 7 wherein the exposing causes ablation of the exposed areas of the layer.

REMARKS

In the April 25, 2002 Office Action, the Examiner set forth a restriction requirement between two invention groups: Group 1 (claims 3 - 6 and 10 - 14) and Group II (claims 7 - 9) and indicated that a provisional election to the Group II invention was made by Norman Klivans on April 18, 2002. Applicant hereby, affirms this election.

The Examiner also rejected claims 7 - 9 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jolly et al. (USP 5,395,508) and Arndt et al. (USP 5,766,441). The Examiner indicated that these references are combinable as they are both from the same technology area of fabricating and employing mask(s) in electrochemical techniques. The Examiner further indicated that it would have been obvious to a person of skill at the time of the invention to have employed the structuring technique taught by Arndt et al. for the mask of Jolly et al. because Arndt et al. have shown that the removal of excess material by ablation would have significantly increased the tolerance control of the pattern structures of the mask, absent evidence to the contrary.

This rejection is traversed. It is Applicant's belief that the proposed combination of references fail to appropriately establish a prima facie case of obviousness. The Examiner is correct in that both of these references are directed to the formation of deposits of material via electroplating, however, the similarity appears to end there. The '441 reference is directed to a technique for manufacturing orifice plates that are eventually separated from the substrate on which they were formed (column 11, line 66

to column 12, line 1) where deposition occurs through pits in a photoresist (column 11, lines 24 - 26) that is adhered to the substrate (column 10, lines 56 - 65), whereafter the photoresist is removed by dissolving. The '508 reference, on the other hand, is directed to the formation of deposits on weakly conductive flexible substrates (such as to form heating elements for heated gloves). In the '508 reference, a mask is not formed on and adhered to a substrate to be plated. In the '508 reference, after plating the mask is separated from the substrate and the mask is reused in plating a different portion of the substrate (column 6, lines 27 - 40). Furthermore, in the '508 reference the material deposited onto the substrate is not separated from the substrate, but it and the substrate form an integral part of the final structure that is to be produced.

The justification and support for the Examiner's statement concerning the reason (i.e. to significantly increase tolerance control) is unclear to the Applicant and if the rejection is maintained further clarification of this point and its relevance to the problems addressed by the '508 patent, the '441 patent, and the instant application is earnestly requested.

Based on the significant differences in these references and significant differences in their purposes, it is believed that a proposed combination of these references to make obvious the claimed invention in the present application is inappropriate. As such, reconsideration of the rejections is earnestly requested.

To make explicit what is believed to be implicit in claim 7, Applicant has amended claim 7 to indicate that the supported mask may be used in modifying a substrate and that the support is not the substrate. The concept of the support not being the substrate is found throughout the specification (e.g. page 8, lines 15 - 18) and the concept of the mask being used to modify the substrate is also found throughout the specification (e.g. in terms of being used for electroplating see, e.g., page 19, lines 20 - 25 and in terms of being used for etching see, e.g., page 38, lines 9 - 14).

In review of the remarks set forth above and the amendment to independent claim 7, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection and passage to allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Yours,



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I certify that this document and fee is being deposited on October 25, 2002 with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail under 37 C.F.R. 1.8 and is addressed to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231.


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EXHIBIT A:
VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS SHOWING CHANGES

Exhibit A

7. (Twice Amended) A method of making a supported mask that may be used in modifying a substrate, comprising:

obtaining a support that is not the substrate;

applying at least one layer of dielectric material to said support; and

exposing said layer to patterned light to substantially cause removal of said layer from said support in exposed areas.